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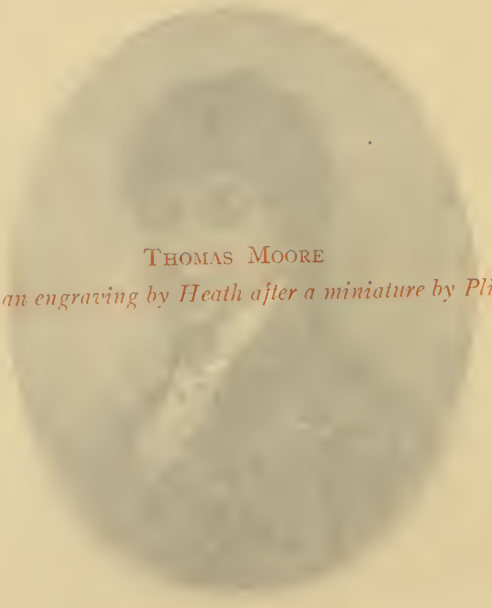
TOM MOORE IN BERMUDA

A Bit of Literary Gossip



THOMAS MOORE

From an engraving by Heath after a miniature by Plimer

THOMAS MOORE
From an engraving by Anderson after Heath

Tom Moore in Bermuda

A Bit of Literary Gossip

By

J. C. L. CLARK

SECOND EDITION

BOSTON
SMITH AND McCANCE
1909

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The Plimpton Press, Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.
Published October, 1909

TO

MY MOTHER

IN MEMORY OF

"BLAND BERMUDIAN DAYS"

THE tercentenary of the beginning of English settlement at Bermuda seems a suitable time for reissuing this monograph, which first appeared in 1897. Various inaccuracies of that modest pamphlet are here corrected, and some material gathered in the twelve years' interval has been made use of.

In prefacing so slight a work it would be unbearably pompous to name in formal style all who have helped me in its preparation. Yet all such, especially many good friends of mine at Bermuda, will, I trust, believe me grateful.

Lancaster, Mass., 23 May, 1909.

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Thomas Moore . . . . . Frontispiece

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"The few ladies that *pass* for white are to be sure the most unlovely pieces of crockery I ever set my eyes upon —

"You must not be surprised, if I fall in love, with the first pretty face I see on my return home — for certainly the 'human face divine' has degenerated wonderfully in these countries, & if I were a painter & wished to preserve my ideas of beauty immaculate, I would not suffer the brightest belle of —— to be my house-maid."

These paragraphs appear to have been written at Norfolk; but the second did service in a letter written two months later, in which the word "Bermuda" supplies the blank.

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Hester Louisa Tucker 33
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This was Mrs. Tucker's home from her marriage in 1803 till 1810, when her husband purchased from the widow of President Henry Tucker the estate called Rose Hill. The ruins of the home of her girlhood are also pointed out at St. George's.

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"What a new interest and charm will be given to many of Moore's beautiful songs, when we are allowed to trace the feeling that inspired them, whether derived from some immediate and present impression; or from remembered emotion, that sometimes swells in the breast, like the heaving of the waves, when the winds are still!"

Mrs. Jameson, 1829.

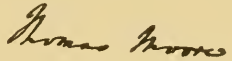
"And all the bright creations fair
That 'neath his master hand awake,
Some in tears and some in smiles,
Like Nea in the summer isles,
Or Kathleen by the lonely lake,
Round his radiant throne repair."

Denis Florence MacCarthy: "The centenary of Moore."

TOM MOORE IN BERMUDA

I

THOMAS MOORE, at the age of twenty, went over to London from his native Dublin to enter himself at the Inner Temple and to publish a translation of Anacreon. This was followed by a collection of original verse, which appeared under the name of "Thomas Little."[1] Moore's wit and good-nature, and his poetic genius, soon made him a favourite of society.



Four years later, through the influence of the Earl of Moira, who as Lord Rawdon had won great distinction in the American war, and now stood high in the confidence of the Prince of Wales, the young poet was given the office of registrar of the court of vice-admiralty at Bermuda. He was pleased over the appointment, even to

[1]These poems, which are almost all of an amatory character, I found thus catalogued in an old Virginia newspaper: "On Julia weeping, Delia sleeping, Celia sighing, Chloe dying; on Peggy's dream, Sally's whim, Maria's breast, Nancy's crest, Molly's willow, Nelly's pillow, with a variety of others too tedious to mention." The "Poetical works of the late Thomas Little, Esq." was republished as a single book for many years. The author of that singular work, "Prodigious!!! or, Childe Paddie in London," remarked in 1818: . . . "we still find them not suppressed, but in print, and in *high* sale; for it appears the listless and restless dissipa-

such prosaic tasks as overhauling ship's accounts — that it was also the duty of a "registrar of the admiralty" to keep a record of all the admirals born is a delightfully fantastic conjecture of "Mark Twain's." "It promised," as the late Charles Kent happily says, "to afford him the means of providing better than he could otherwise then have hoped to do for the four dearest beings to him upon earth — his parents and his sisters."[2] Besides, there was some idea that he was delicate, and for centuries Bermuda has been famous as a health resort.[3]

tion of ladies of ton, now-a-days, must have their several copies; one for the dressing-room, one for the carriage, one for the pillow, and one for the boudoir" (pp. 23-24). From the definitive edition of Moore's "Poetical works" (1840-'41) much objectionable matter in "Little" was omitted.

[2]Works of Moore, centenary edition, p. xxiv.

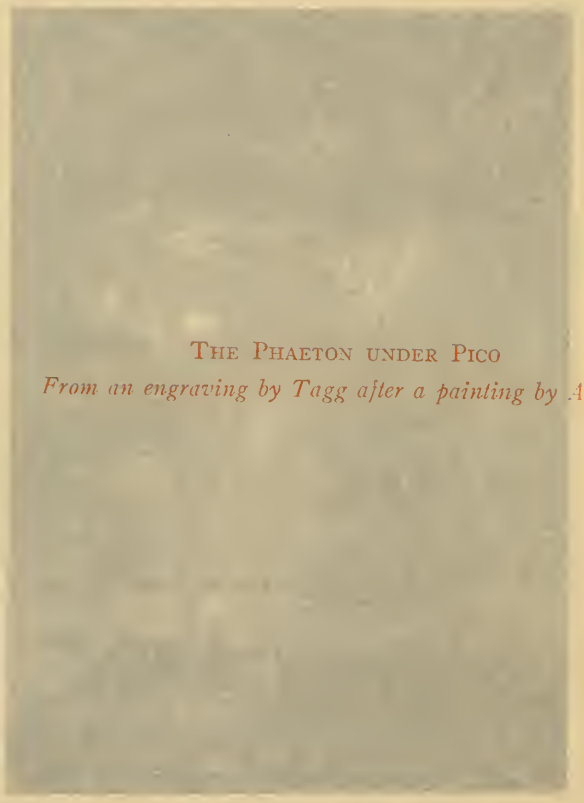
[3]Edmund Waller sang of "the Summer Islands" in verses first printed in 1645:

"So sweet the air, so moderate the clime,
None sickly lives, or dies before his time."

One who sought health there in the early days of the colony was the Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, of Malden, Massachusetts, author of "The day of doom." After the publication of that "sulphurous" poem, Mr. Wigglesworth, as he had long been of infirm body, "had a great mind to go to Bermuda." He set sail, accompanied by a friend, in September, 1663. "It was a full month ere we got thither," he wrote, "by which long and tedious voyage no doubt but I received much hurt, and got so much cold as took away much of the benefit of that sweet and temperate air." In his later work, "Meat out of the eater," we perhaps may trace the recollection of that dismal voyage in such figures as, —

"What if thou tossed art
With boisterous winds and seas?
Behold the haven where thou shalt
Enjoy long rest and ease."

He remained at Bermuda about seven and a half months. It is creditable to "that sweet and temperate air" that the pious rhymester lived over



THE PHAETON UNDER PICO

From an engraving by Tagg after a painting by Anderson

Thursday, 22 September, 1803, saw Moore at Portsmouth, ready to sail on the *Phaeton* frigate — "this 'Phaeton that whipp'd me to the West,'" as he later wrote.[4] "The wide sea before my eyes," says he in a letter to his mother, "I write my heart's farewell to the dear darlings at home. Heaven send I may return to English ground with pockets *more heavy*, and spirits *not less light* than I now leave it with. Everything has been arranged to my satisfaction. I am prepared with every comfort for the voyage, and a fair breese and a loud yo — yo — ye! are all that's now waiting to set me afloat."[5]

The following Sunday the *Phaeton* quitted Spithead, bearing, besides Moore, another notable passenger in the person of Anthony Merry, the newly appointed minister to the United States, with his wife and suite. In a short week the frigate lay to under Pico in the Azores. While she lay becalmed, Moore amused himself with an "Epistle" to his friend Viscount Strangford, the translator of Camoens, written "aboard the Phaeton frigate, off the Azores, by moonlight." It has this pretty description:

> "The sea is like a silvery lake,
> And, o'er its calm, the vessel glides

forty years after his return to New England, married for the second and the third time, and begot several children.

In his "Sacred theory of the earth" (1684) Dr. Thomas Burnet hazarded that "according to the Proportion of time they hold out there [at Bermuda], after they are arrived from other Parts, one may reasonably suppose that the Natives would live two hundred Years"!

[4] "Epistles, odes, and other poems" (see note *infra*), *page of "Errata."*

[5] "Memoirs, journal, and correspondence of Thomas Moore." Edited by Lord John Russell. 8 vols. London, 1853-'56. Vol. i., p. 135.

Gently, as if it fear'd to wake
The slumber of the silent tides!
The only envious cloud that lowers,
Hath hung its shade on Pico's height,
Where dimly, mid the dusk, he towers,
And scowling at this heav'n of light,
Exults to see the infant storm
Cling darkly round his giant form!"[6]

Another week of calm was followed by boisterous weather. "I often thought," wrote Moore, "of my dear father's 'sea-room,' when we were rolling about on the vast Atlantic, with nothing of animated life to be seen around us except now and then the beautiful little flying-fish, fluttering out of the water, or a fine large turtle asleep on the surface."[7] The flying-fish he made the subject of verses[8] which breathe that simple religious faith which we often find expressed in his later poems. This is true also of the "Stanzas" written on this voyage, beginning, —

"A beam of tranquillity smil'd in the West,
The storms of the morning pursued us no more,
And the wave, while it welcom'd the moment of rest,
Still heav'd, as remembering ills that were o'er!

[6] "Epistles, odes, and other poems." By Thomas Moore, Esq. London, printed for James Carpenter [by Charles Whittingham], 1806. 4to. Frontispiece. Subsequent editions in two volumes, octavo, were published by Carpenter in 1807 (? 1808), '10, '14, '17, and '22. Some changes and omissions were made in the second edition.

Most of the American poems, again revised, appeared in the second volume of Moore's collected "Poetical works" (10 vols., 1840-'41), under the title "Poems relating to America."

[7] "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 139.

[8] "Epistles," pp. 14-15.

"Serenely my heart took the hue of the hour,
Its passions were sleeping, were mute as the dead,
And the spirit becalm'd but remember'd their power,
As the billow the force of the gale that was fled!"[9]

Moore confesses to no great liking for the sea; yet, in spite of the rough weather, the six weeks' voyage passed pleasantly. Every one was kind and attentive to him. He often dined with the officers of the ship in the gun-room. "Never," he exclaims, "was there a better hearted set of fellows . . . I really felt a strong regret at leaving them, — the more so, as it then for the first time appeared that I was going among strangers, who had no common medium of communion with me"[10] . . . He was to learn, however, that his fame had preceded him: his songs, so popular at home, were not absent from Virginia spinets, and his poems were reprinted in the "periodical publications" of the country.

[9] "Epistles," p. 7.

[10] "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 137-8.

II

At Norfolk, Virginia, whither he arrived 7 November, he remained some two months, waiting for a chance to cross to Bermuda on a man-of-war. Not only could he go more comfortably on one of his Majesty's ships, but save as well the twenty or thirty guineas he would have to pay for passage on a merchantman. At every opportunity he despatched to his mother letters full of tender solicitude. "Dear darlings at home!" he cries, "how incessantly I think of you: every night I dream that I am amongst you: sometimes I find you happy and smiling as I could wish: sometimes the picture is not so pleasant, and I awake unhappy, but surely Heaven protects you for me, and we shall meet and long be united and blessed together."[11]

Introduced by Mr. Merry, Moore became the guest of Colonel John Hamilton, the British consul at Norfolk. Hamilton was a North Carolina Loyalist, who had served under Cornwallis in the Revolution. Unlike many of his fellows he had escaped confiscation of his estate,[12] and, as consul, had won the genuine esteem of the Norfolk people. In June, 1807, when a mob, furious at the attack of the *Leopard* on the *Chesapeake*, dragged the British flag through the dust in front of the consulate, Colonel Hamilton's personal popularity alone

[11] "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 143.

[12] "The history of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1780 — 1783." By Edward McCrady, LL.D. New York and London, 1902. P. 586.

saved his home from destruction.[13] On the outbreak of the war of 1812 he sought refuge in England. Moore describes him as "a plain and hospitable man, and his wife full of homely but comfortable and genuine civility."[14] Mrs. Hamilton had beautiful and abundant auburn hair, which greatly excited the young poet's admiration.[15]

COLONEL HAMILTON'S HOUSE IN 1865

The Hamilton house stood on the southwest corner of Main Street and King's Lane. Passing along this now squalid lane, which connects Main and "Wide Water" Streets, one finds it hard to realise that it was once bordered by the Colonel's

[13] "The pictorial field book of the war of 1812." By Benson J. Lossing. New York, 1868. P. 685.

[14] "Memoirs, vol. i., p. 138.

[15] "Stanzas, by Thomas Moore, Esq. addressed to Mrs. H. . . . at Norfolk, Virginia." *The port folio* (Philadelphia), 6 October, 1804; reprinted, with other miscellanea, at the end of Longworth's edition of "Odes of Anacreon" (New York, 1805), vol. ii., pp. 153-4.

trim gardens. Fifty years later it was for a short time occupied by George "Prince Regent" James, the novelist, who was British consul for Virginia from 1852 to 1858.[16]

Twenty-seven years before Moore's visit to Norfolk, during

the attack by Lord Dunmore, the town had been burned to the ground. It was rebuilt chiefly of wood.[17] The streets

[16]Dr. Lossing, the historian, was entertained by G. P. R. James in the spring of 1853 in "a plain, old-fashioned house on Main Street." Mr. James told him that it was formerly the home of Colonel Hamilton, and that Tom Moore stayed there. (See "Tom Moore in America," *Harper's magazine*, September, 1877.) Twelve years later Lossing sketched the house for his "Field book of the war of 1812." A few years ago, Mr. George C. Reid, of Norfolk, wrote me with reference to this sketch: "The house at the corner of King's Lane and Main Street is the one represented . . . and is the one in which Mr. G. P. R. James lived a part of the time he was in Norfolk. I can very well remember his living there, and have often heard that Thomas Moore was entertained there." Another life-long resident of Norfolk, Mr. Thomas B. Rowland, has informed me that his father told him Colonel Hamilton's residence stood on the west side of King's Lane. The house is now remodelled out of all likeness to its former appearance.

[17]"For when they independence gain'd,
Returning back to what remain'd
Of their depopulated town, . . .
They'd . . . on their ground, with haste and care,
Each man his tenement repair;
And to the chimneys, which yet stood,
Again erect a house of wood:
Thus rais'd once more the fair renown
Of what was then call'd Chimney Town."

"A poetical picture of America." By a Lady. London, 1809. P. 102.

were muddy and noisome.[18] Shortly before his arrival the place had suffered a visitation of yellow fever.[19] Altogether it is not to be wondered at that "the capital of Virginia," as he calls it, did not please the traveller.

"This Norfolk," he writes, "is a most strange place; nothing to be seen in the streets but dogs and negroes, and the few ladies that pass for white are to be sure the most unlovely pieces of crockery I ever set my eyes upon."[20] He confesses, however, in verse, to tender glances exchanged across a ribbon-counter with a certain Caty, a fair Haytian exile.[21] Again he exclaims: "Oh! if you saw the vehicles the people drive about in here, white coaches with black servants, and horses of no colour at all; it is really a most comical place."[22]

After all, lovers of the thriving Virginian port can afford to forgive these century-old sneers, however cheap and unsympathetic. With Colonel Hamilton, Moore penetrated the Great Dismal Swamp — stretching far away to the southward into North Carolina — as far as Lake Drummond. This excursion, with a tragic legend belonging to that rather uncanny body of water, gave the impulse for the hauntingly pathetic ballad, "The Lake of the Dismal Swamp," one of the score or so of his poems that have stood the test of time.

[18]Charles William Janson in his "Stranger in America" (London, 1807) gives an appalling account of losing his shoe while trying to "ford the mud" near his boarding-house in Norfolk, and vainly "raking and dragging" for it the next morning (pp. 327-8).

[19]"Epistles," p. 21, *note*. See also Janson, p. 328.

[20]"Memoirs," vol. i., p. 139.

[21]"Epistles," pp. 64-5.

[22]"Memoirs," vol. i., p. 141.

A cold snap makes the poet long for Bermuda. He promises his sister, —[23]

> ". . . when the sun, with warmer smile,
> Shall light me to my destin'd isle,
> You shall have many a cowslip-bell
> Where Ariel slept, and many a shell,
> In which the gentle spirit drew
> From honey flowers the morning dew!"[24]

But, already, he realised that the uncertain hopes respecting the lucrativeness of his appointment were to be disappointed, except in the event of a war with Spain. In that case — "*tant mieux pour Jeannette.*"[25]

10 December Moore hailed with delight the arrival of the *Driver*, Captain Compton, a staunch sloop of war, built of cedar at Bermuda,[26] and shortly to sail thither.

[23]"To Miss M——e. From Norfolk, in Virginia, November, 1803." ("Epistles," pp. 16-23.)

[24]Moore several times alludes to the association with Bermuda of that "tricksy spirit" Ariel. "Among the many charms which Bermuda has for a poetic eye," he says in a note to his Epistle to Lady Donegall, "we cannot for an instant forget that it is the scene of Shakspeare's Tempest, and that here he conjured up the 'delicate Ariel,' who alone is worth the whole heaven of ancient mythology." Of course the plain suggestion of the lines, —

> "Safely in harbour
> Is the king's ship; in the deep nook, where once
> Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew
> From the still-vex'd Bermoothes, there she's hid" —

is that Prospero's isle, whence he despatched Ariel on his faërie errand, lay far removed from the "Bermoothes." Shakspere, however, undoubtedly took some incidents for his play from contemporary narratives of the wreck of the *Sea-Venture* at Bermuda in 1609, and the sojourn there of Sir George Somers and his companions.

[25]"Memoirs," vol. i., p. 145.

[26]"Epistles," p. 57, *note*.

III

A MONTH later, after a passage of seven days, attended with "tremendous" weather, the *Driver* reached port. Moore thus describes the entrance into St. George's harbour:

> "The morn was lovely, every wave was still,
> When the first perfume of a cedar-hill
> Sweetly awak'd us, and with smiling charms,
> The fairy harbour woo'd us to its arms.
> Gently we stole, before the languid wind,
> Through plaintain shades, that like an awning twin'd
> And kiss'd on either side the wanton sails,
> Breathing our welcome to these vernal vales;
> While, far reflected o'er the wave serene
> Each wooded island shed so soft a green,
> That the enamour'd keel, with whispering play,
> Through liquid herbage seem'd to steal its way!
> Never did weary bark more sweetly glide,
> Or rest its anchor in a lovelier tide!"[27]

But the enjoyment of his arrival at so desirable a haven was not increased by a nearer view of his office. In a letter to his mother, dated 19 January, 1804,[28] he says: "I shall tell you at once that it is *not* worth my while to remain here; that I shall just stop . . . till the spring months come in, when the passages home are always delightfully pleasant, and that then I shall get upon the wing to see my dear friends once more . . . even a Spanish war would make my income by no means worth staying for." He notes that "there are

[27] "Epistles," p. 44.

[28] "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 148-152.

two American ships for trial, whose witnesses I have examined, and whose cause will be decided next month."[29]

Sir Andrew Mitchell and his squadron were in winter quarters at Bermuda; and the admiral, writes Moore in another letter, "has insisted upon my making his table my own during my stay here."[30] Tradition, however, lays especial stress upon his visits at Walsingham, the country-seat of Mr. Samuel Trott, later president of the council and acting governor of the colony.

[29]The summary proceedings against American ships, professedly engaged in neutral trade, by the British authorities was of course one of the principal causes of the war of 1812. Such a case, in which a cargo worth some thirty thousand dollars was confiscated, is reported at length in the pamphlet, "Proceedings of the trial of the ship Two Friends, in the court of vice admiralty in Bermuda" (Philadelphia, 1795).

[30]"Memoirs," vol. i., p. 155.

WALSINGHAM

IV

Walsingham, famous for hospitality, belonged for generations to the descendants of Perient Trott, a London merchant who in 1664 was "husband" of the Bermuda Company. The house stands, looking out across Castle Harbour, on a neck of land traversed by the highway from Hamilton to St. George's. Through an avenue of cedars one approaches the ancient homestead, near the shore, between two mangrove-bordered lakes. It is, says Mr. Bushell,[31] "one of the oldest, if not the oldest, and undoubtedly the most interesting private residence in Bermuda . . . here may still be seen a specimen of the early style of house-building — upright cedar studs, with lath and plaster between." Like nearly all Bermuda buildings, walls and roof are of white-washed limestone. The high, empty rooms, with their woodwork of rich, dark cedar, the winding staircase, convey clearly the impression of former manorial ease and present loneliness and decay.

From the house a foot-path leads through wooded grounds. Here the coffee-tree and the cherry, the lemon and the orange, mingle with the everywhere present cedar and oleander, and the myrtle clambers where it will. Tiny lakelets give back the blue of the summer sky. One may enter mysterious caverns, where the guide sets fire to a handful of dry palmetto leaves, and one sees, festooned with icicle-like stalactites,

[31] "Handbook of Bermuda," 1897.

which deep, limpid pools reflect, long galleries winding away underground.[32] There, a veteran of its race, stands "Moore's calabash tree," still bearing on gnarled branches its green, oval gourds. It was of this tree that Moore wrote in the epistle to his friend "Joe" Atkinson:[33]

> "'The day-light is gone — but, before we depart,
> Here's a brimmer of love to the friend of my heart,
> To the friend who himself, is a chalice, a bowl
> In which Heaven has pour'd a rich bumper of soul!'[34]
>
> "'Twas thus, by the shade of a calabash-tree,
> With a few, who could feel and remember like me,
> The charm, that to sweeten my goblet I threw,
> Was a sigh to the past and a blessing on you!"

"The shade of the Calabash Tree," writes Richard Cotter, in his "Sketches of Bermuda" (1828), "mentioned in the writings of our celebrated poet, Moore, and which time appears only to have improved, is still the resting-place of the pic nic parties from St. George's and other parts of the Colony."[35] Years later Moore himself observed: "How truly politic it is in a poet to connect his verse with well-known and interesting

[32]. . . "the lime-tree grove that once was dear,
The sunny wave, the bower, the breezy hill,
The sparkling grotto" . . .
"Epistles," p. 46.

[33]"Epistles," p. 117.

[34]In the second edition this stanza runs:

> "'The daylight is gone — but, before we depart,
> One cup shall go round to the friend of my heart,
> To the kindest, the dearest, — oh! judge by the tear,
> That I shed while I name him, how kind and how dear!' "

[35]"Sketches of Bermuda, or Somers Islands." By Richard Cotter, Purser, R. N. London, 1828. P. 26.

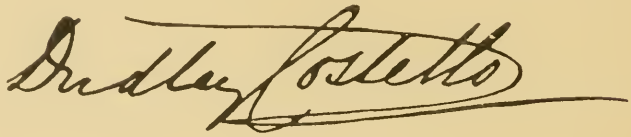
"Moore's calabash tree" (1897)

localities . . . I have myself, in more than one instance, very agreeably experienced. Among the memorials of this description, which, as I learn with pleasure and pride, still keep me remembered in some of those beautiful regions of the West which I visited, I shall mention but one slight instance,

Moore's Calabash Tree (1828)

as showing how potently the Genius of the Place may lend to song a life and imperishableness to which, in itself, it boasts no claim or pretension . . . lines in one of my Bermudian Poems . . still live in memory, I am told, on those fairy shores, connecting my name with the picturesque spot they describe, and the noble old tree which I believe still adorns it. One of the few treasures (of *any* kind) I possess, is a goblet formed of one of the fruit-shells of this remarkable tree, which was brought from Bermuda, a few years since, by Mr. Dudley

Costello,[36] and which that gentleman, having had it tastefully mounted as a goblet, very kindly presented to me."[37]



President Trott, Moore's host, was the last of his race to own Walsingham. Without doubt years of too lavish hospitality ate deeply into his resources, for at his death the estate passed by forced sale to another family.

[36]In the '20's Dudley Costello (1803 — 1865), a man of charming personality, was for several years stationed at Bermuda as an ensign in the 96th. There he delighted his friends by a manuscript newspaper, called the *Grouper*, after a Bermudian fish of rapacious habits. On his return to Europe, although encouraged by Moore, he vainly sought a publisher for a volume of sketches and descriptions of Bermuda.

[37]"Poetical works" (1840-'41), vol. ii., *preface*. Moore mentions the gift in his diary, 20 March, 1834 ("Memoirs," vol. vii., p. 28). "Bessy does nothing," he writes elsewhere, "but drive about, carrying it with her and exhibiting it to all her friends."

V

It might have been at Walsingham that Moore wrote:

"Close to my wooded bank below,
In glassy calm the waters sleep,
And to the sun-beam proudly show
The coral rocks they love to steep!
The fainting breeze of morning fails,
The drowsy boat moves slowly past,
And I can almost touch its sails
That languish idly round the mast.
The sun has now profusely given
The flashes of a noontide heaven,
And, as the wave reflects his beams,
Another heaven its surface seems!
Blue light and clouds of silvery tears
So pictur'd o'er the waters lie
That every languid bark appears
To float along a burning sky!"[38]

"These little islands of Bermuda," he writes, with similar enthusiasm, in his letter of 19 January, "form certainly one of the prettiest and most romantic spots that I could ever have imagined, and the descriptions which represent it as like a place of fairy enchantment are very little beyond the truth. From my window now as I write, I can see five or six different islands, the *most distant* not a mile from the others, and separated by the clearest, sweetest coloured sea you can conceive; for the water here is so singularly transparent, that, in coming in, we could see the rocks under the ship quite plainly. These

[38] "Epistles," pp. 61-62.

little islands are thickly covered with cedar groves, through the vistas of which you catch a few pretty white houses, which my poetical short-sightedness always transforms into temples" . . . This poetically myopic fancy he elaborates in verse:

> . . . . . "in every myrtle grove
> Secluded bashful, like a shrine of love,
> Some elfin mansion sparkled through the shade;
> And, while the foliage interposing play'd,
> Wreathing the structure into various grace,
> Fancy would love, in many a form, to trace
> The flowery capital, the shaft, the porch,
> And dream of temples, till her kindling torch
> Lighted me back to all the glorious days
> Of Attic genius; and I seem'd to gaze
> On marble, from the rich Pentelic mount,
> Gracing the umbrage of some Naiad's fount",[39]

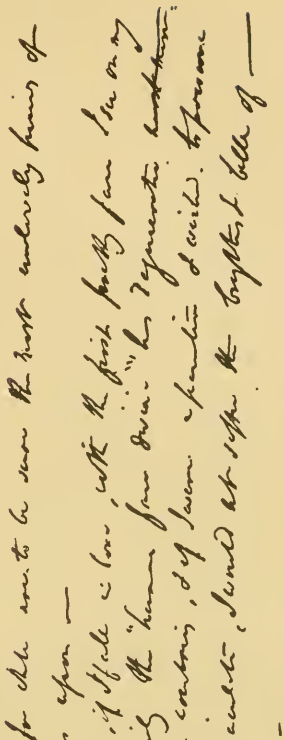
and, many years later, was to draw the same picture in the description of the Vale of Cashmere in "Lalla Rookh":

> "Oh! to see it at sunset, — when warm o'er the Lake
> Its splendour at parting a summer eve throws,
> Like a bride, full of blushes, when ling'ring to take
> A last look of her mirror at night ere she goes! —
> When the shrines through the foliage are gleaming half shown,
> And each hallows the hour by some rites of its own."

[39] "Epistles," pp. 44-45. A Bermudian poet, Thomas Edward Nelmes, has described a similar scene in homelier verse:

> . . . "when the Sun was sinking in the West,
> And his last rays illumed each woody crest,
> Or, haply on the hills' green slopes delayed;
> And every valley lay in deepening shade;
> While thickly sprinkled over hill and plain
> And by the margin of the dimpled main,
> Oft half concealed o'er topping groves behind
> Of limes, palmettoes, and the pride of Ind,
> The white-washed cottages with smiling mien
> Seemed tell-tales of the happiness within". . .

But the bright vision ends abruptly. No Nymphs and Graces (continues the letter) come tripping from the white-washed temple; but, "to my great disappointment, I find that a few miserable negroes is all 'the bloomy flush of life' it has to boast of. Indeed, you must not be surprised, dear mother, if I fall in love with the first pretty face I see on my return home, for certainly the 'human face divine' has degenerated wonderfully in these countries; and if I were a painter, and wished to preserve my ideas of beauty immaculate, I would not suffer the brightest belle of Bermuda to be my house-maid."



From a commonplace-book of Moore's

VI

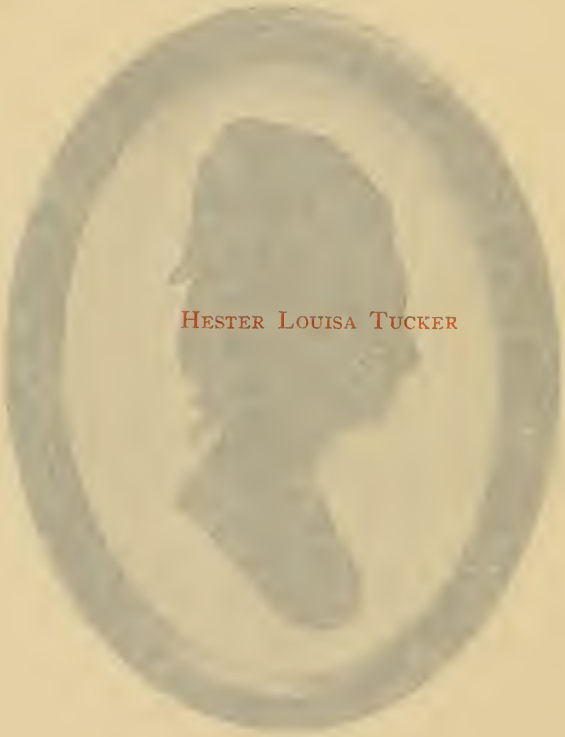
This too severe judgment was not Moore's last word on the subject. "The women of Bermuda," he says in a note to one of his "Epistles," "though not generally handsome, have an affectionate languor in their look and manner, which is always interesting. What the French imply by their epithet *aimante* seems very much the character of the young Bermudian girls — that predisposition to loving, which, without being awakened by any particular object, diffuses itself through the general manner in a tone of tenderness which never fails to fascinate."[40]

Probably one will not go far astray in tracing this change of heart to his acquaintance with two Bermudian girls whose combined — or respective — charms he celebrated in verses, half playful, half passionate, addressed to "Nea."[41] We have Moore's word that there were "two real Neas"; tradition, however, and, no doubt, contemporary gossip, has identified the ideal fair one with Hester Louisa Tucker, the wife of Mr. William Tucker, a young merchant of St. George's.

This young lady was the eldest child of Tudor Tucker, and of the sixth generation from George Tucker, an early settler

[40] "Epistles," p. 95.

[41] The motto of Moore's "Odes to Nea" is from the "Medea" of Euripides: νέα τυραννεῖ, "a new queen reigns." In other words — off with the old love, on with the new. Nea Slumberton, in Edward Whitty's forgotten novel "Friends of Bohemia," is perhaps a literary descendant of Moore's divinity.



HESTER LOUISA TUCKER

of Bermuda, among whose descendants have been many persons of distinction. Her father, Tudor, was a son of St. George and Hester (Stowe) Tucker, of Bermuda, where he was born in 1742. He appears to have been an officer in the Royal navy. His first wife dying childless in 1784, he married 1 December of the same year, at the church of St. Lawrence Jewry in London, Mary Lamprey,[42] of Sturry, Kent, and by her had four children.[43] Mr. Tucker died at Bermuda in November, 1800. Among his first cousins were Thomas Tudor Tucker, treasurer of the United States from 1801 till his death in 1828, and his brother St. George, the Virginia jurist, both of whom emigrated to the southern colonies early in life and took the American side in the Revolution.

HESTER LOUISA TUCKER

Although, like a true sailor's daughter, she is said to have been born at sea, it is more than probable that the remem-

[42]Daughter of John and Mary Lamprey, born at Frindsbury, Kent, in 1757.

[43]Hester Louisa, born 20 August, 1786 (baptised "Esther" Louisa at St. George's 17 December, 1786); St. George, born 1788; James Crawford, born 1795; and Eliza Bridger, born and died 1796. The two daughters were doubtless named respectively for Mr. Tucker's mother and half-sister Elizabeth, wife of Bridger Goodrich, a Virginia Loyalist who in 1778, at the age of twenty, commanded a British privateer fitted out at Bermuda.

bered experiences of Hester Tucker's rather short life were confined to the little island colony. When, 11 June, 1803, in the parish church at St. George's, she was married to William Tucker, she was not quite seventeen. The official witnesses of the ceremony were her mother and her father's cousin Henry Tucker, president of the council. The bridegroom, who was about five years her senior, she must have known from childhood, although they were only distantly, if at all, related.

First seeing the light at St. Eustatius, one of the Dutch West Indies, early in 1781, William Tucker's origin is of some interest, connected as it is with one of the most disgraceful episodes in British naval history.

His parents, Richard Tucker and Mary Foote, were married in 1759 by the rector of St. George's, Mr. Alexander Richardson,[44] who forty-four years later united their youngest son and pretty Hester. Having taken a medical course in London under Dr. Henry Watson, Richard Tucker settled as physician and trader in St. Eustatius, like many other Bermudians — Packwoods, Seons, Wingoods, Jenningses, Gilberts, Hills,

[44]Excepting a short incumbency at St. Eustatius, Mr. Richardson was minister at St. George's continuously for nearly half a century. His private register and diary, now in the possession of his great-grandson and successor, the Rev. F. J. F. Lightbourn, has furnished me with some of the facts here set forth. The worthier qualities of this good man have been somewhat obscured by tales of the brutal practical jokes for which he had a weakness; yet a French visitor to Bermuda in 1793, Félix Carteaux, could write: "J'amais . . . beaucoup le ministre *curé* de Georges-Town. J'ai connu peu d'hommes plus sage que lui et d'un cœur plus compatissant. Son érudition ne s'étendait pas loin: il n'avait guères lu que la Bible et quantité de sermons" ("Soirées bermudiennes," Bordeaux, 1802, p. 14)— a very agreeable picture, surely, of an old-fashioned clergyman.

Penistons, Perkinsons, Outerbridges, Burches, Burrowses — who were drawn thither by the unrivaled commercial advantages of the Dutch island as a free port; and there in 1780 he died, leaving by his will, besides other property, a house and land in Bermuda to his widow. William, a posthumous child, was baptised by the English pastor at St. Eustatius in March, 1781. England had just declared war against Holland; and, in February, Sir George Rodney had taken the island, and, not excepting British subjects, plundered the inhabitants of their wealth with frightful thoroughness. Leaving this scene of infamy behind, Mrs. Tucker speedily returned with her children to Bermuda.

But in finding out who and of what condition were his lady-love of a day — and her lord, we have wandered far enough from Tom Moore, whose friendship with the girl-wife we may, in all sincerity, believe nothing worse than indiscreet. Prior to his marriage there is no reason to suppose Moore's life one of especial chastity; but doubtless a good deal of his license was merely on paper, and in this instance the circumstantial evidence for acquittal seems convincing. In Bermuda "Nea" is regarded as a paragon of beauty and virtue. The "Odes to Nea," tainted as they are with the fashionable libidinosity of the time, were not intended as serious autobiography. Some of them could hardly have been addressed to Hester Tucker at all. Like the Trouvères of the twelfth century Moore made it somewhat of a religious duty to love. It was, however, natural that his open admiration should arouse the indignation, if not the jealousy,

of the one playing Albert to this not inconsolable Werther. The remoteness of the "Odes to Nea," from actual occurrences must be admitted, if one suppose Mr. Tucker to be the "other" alluded to in the following lines.[45] It is not believable that Bermudian brides, in the year eighteen hundred and four, "oft" returned home at dawn under the protection of strange gallants.

> "Well — peace to thy heart, though another's it be,
> And health to thy cheek, though it bloom not for me!
> To-morrow, I sail for those cinnamon groves,
> Where nightly the ghost of the Carribee roves,[46]
> And, far from thine eye, oh! perhaps I may yet
> Its seduction forgive and its splendour forget!
> Farewell to Bermuda, and long may the bloom
> Of the lemon and myrtle its vallies perfume;
> May spring to eternity hallow the shade,
> Where Ariel has warbled, and Waller has stray'd![47]

[45] "Epistles," pp. 95-96.

[46] "When I wrote these lines," says Moore, "I had some idea of leaving Bermuda and visiting the West-India Islands."

[47] Sir J. H. Lefroy ("Memorials of the Bermudas," vol. ii., pp. 595-6) very satisfactorily disproved, by means of parliamentary records, Edmund Waller's legendary residence at Bermuda under the Commonwealth, which was indeed doubted by his early biographers Atterbury, Fenton, and Dr. Johnson. Lefroy also cites certain lines from Waller's "Battle of the Summer Islands" as "evidence that the poem was written before the marriage of 'Sacharissa' to Robert Sydney, afterwards Earl of Leicester" (*sic!* Leicester was Lady Dorothy Sydney's father, not her husband).

> "No passion there in my free breast should move,
> None but the sweet and best of passions, love.
> There while I sing, if gentle love be by,
> That tunes my lute, and winds the strings so high,
> With the sweet sound of Sacharissa's name
> I'll make the listening savages grow tame."

(Waller: "Poems," ed. Drury, p. 68.) "It cannot be supposed," Elijah Fenton rather primly observes, "that Mr. *Waller* wou'd insinuate any remains

HOUSE SHIP &

Home of Hester Louisa Tucker
St. George's, Bermuda

And thou — when, at dawn, thou shalt happen to roam
Through the lime-cover'd alley that leads to thy home,
Where oft, when the dance and the revel were done,
And the stars were beginning to fade in the sun,
I have led thee along, and have told by the way
What my heart all the night had been burning to say —
Oh! think of the past — give a sigh to those times,
And a blessing for me to that alley of limes!"

Of Hetty Tucker's appearance, whether she was stately or petite, dark or fair, we have no definite knowledge. There are, I believe, no portraits of her extant except two silhouettes, belonging to descendants, which present a not unpleasing, but rather irregular, aquiline profile. Moore writes of "Nea" (but, as we shall see, there is always the difficulty of the two Neas),—

of passion for the Lady *Dorothy* after her marriage; the names of *Sidney* and *Sacharissa* were laid down together in 1639." The emphasis must, however, be laid on the allusion to "listening savages," which shows clearly enough Waller's lack of acquaintance with the scene of his poem. If Bermuda once had a savage population—the subject involves some nice questions of historical controversy—it was exterminated about the beginning of the sixteenth century, a hundred years before the island was settled by Englishmen. As Mr. Drury points out, Waller could hardly have originated the story related in his mock-heroic verses — the attempt to capture two whales off the shore of "noble Warwick's share." Very likely he heard it told by some sea-faring friend. Similar combats are described in Cotter's "Sketches of Bermuda," pp. 56-60.

The Waller myth received a local impetus through the discovery at Bermuda, many years ago, of what is alleged to have been the poet's "favourite ring." From varying accounts of the matter one might conclude that two such rings had come to light there! It is, however, a well authenticated tradition, for information regarding which I am indebted to my friend Mrs. E. A. McCallan, that the finding of a ring bearing the initials "E. W." gave the name "Waller's Point" to a spot on the south shore of St. David's Island. The circumstance has, of course, no particular significance except as it illustrates the accidental character of popular nomenclature.

"Her eyelid's black and silken fringe
Lay on her cheek, of vermil tinge",

and,

"Her dark hair fell in mazes bright";

and in reading the glowing lines of the "Odes" we remember that quick-dying vividness of colouring is often young beauty's sole asset: *O formose puer, nimium ne crede colori.* One learns that "Nea" danced well,—

"Divinely through the graceful dance,
You seem'd to float in silent song";

and in one of his letters Moore says that this is a common accomplishment with Bermudian women, though he wonders how the "poor creatures" manage it, since "they never have any instruction, except when some flying dancing-master, by the kindness of fortune, happens to be wrecked and driven ashore on the island."[48]

Miss Lloyd, who visited Bermuda as a member of the family of Archdeacon Spencer[49] twelve years after Mrs. Tucker's death, wrote of her: "I had the pleasure of being introduced to the family of Nea, celebrated in Moore's Odes. Nea is no more, but she still lives in song, and in the fond recollection of her friends. From a likeness which I saw, I should judge her to have been a fine woman, but it is said that she was indebted for her fame less to her beauty, than to

[48] "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 155.

[49] Aubrey George Spencer (1795-1872), son of the poet William Robert Spencer, was successively archdeacon of Bermuda, first bishop of Newfoundland, and bishop of Jamaica. Moore's eighth "Epistle" ("Epistles," pp. 265-271), from Buffalo, was addressed to William Spencer, who played an amusing part in his friend's affair of honour with Jeffrey in 1806.

the fascination, and easy gracefulness of her manners. . . . Notwithstanding all the poetry associated with her name, Nea is represented, by those who knew her, as having been domestic in her habits, and exemplary in the discharge of all the social duties."[50] This is an annoyingly prosaic description of a poetical heroine; Miss Lloyd might be a zoölogist describing a rare specimen. But no one can regret that "Nea" like her famous prototype, at least in Thackeray's version of the tale of Werther and Charlotte,

> "Like a well-conducted person
> Went on cutting bread and butter."

It has been a common belief that "Lines on seeing an infant in Nea's arms"[51] refer to Mrs. Tucker's eldest son. Miss Lloyd was told so in 1829.[52] The verses, which Moore omitted from his collected works,[53] have a certain florid grace.

> "The first ambrosial child of bliss,
> That Psyche to her bosom prest,
> Was not a brighter babe than this,
> Nor blush'd upon a lovelier breast!
> His little snow-white fingers, straying
> Along her lip's luxuriant flower,
> Look'd like a flight of ringdoves playing,

[50] "Sketches of Bermuda." By Susette Harriet Lloyd. London, 1835. Pp. 25-26.

[51] "Epistles," pp. 100-101.

[52] "I saw, also, her ['Nea's'] eldest son, on whom Moore wrote the lines beginning, 'The first ambrosial child of bliss.'" There can be no doubt whom Miss Lloyd means. She describes the reception of the archdeacon and his party at the home of William Tucker in the preceding paragraph.

[53] The final quatrain, indeed, disappeared in the second edition of the "Epistles."

Silvery, through a roseate bower!
And when, to shade the playful boy,
Her dark hair fell, in mazes bright,
Oh! 'twas a type of stolen joy,
'Twas love beneath the veil of night!
Soft as she smil'd, he smil'd again;
They seem'd so kindred in their charms
That one might think, the babe had then
Just budded in her blooming arms!
He look'd like something form'd of air,
Which she had utter'd in a sigh;
Like some young spirit, resting there,
That late had wander'd from her eye!"[54]

This eldest son of Hester was Richard Thomas Tucker, an honoured clergyman of Bermuda. It is related that he was once presented to the bishop of London by Archdeacon Spencer with the words, "My lord, 'the first ambrosial child of bliss'!"

The truth of the foregoing anecdote there is no reason to doubt. Dr. Spencer's sources of information were the same as Miss Lloyd's. It seems rather unfeeling to mention, what family records show, that the Rev. Richard Tucker was born 4 July, 1805, and "Nea's" first child, a daughter who died in infancy, in August, 1804 — both quite too late for the poem.

[54] "A spider a line of his net
Had drawn, from one tree to another,
And on it two sylphids had met,
Having stole from the eye of their mother."
— Parody of Moore by Eaton Stannard Barrett (1786-1820): sung by "Mr. Little" in Barrett's novel, "Six weeks at Long's."

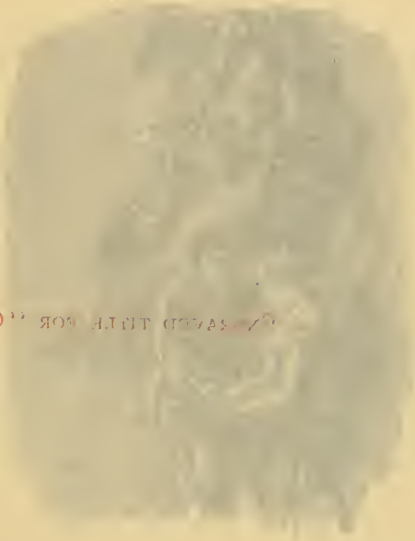
Odes to Nea

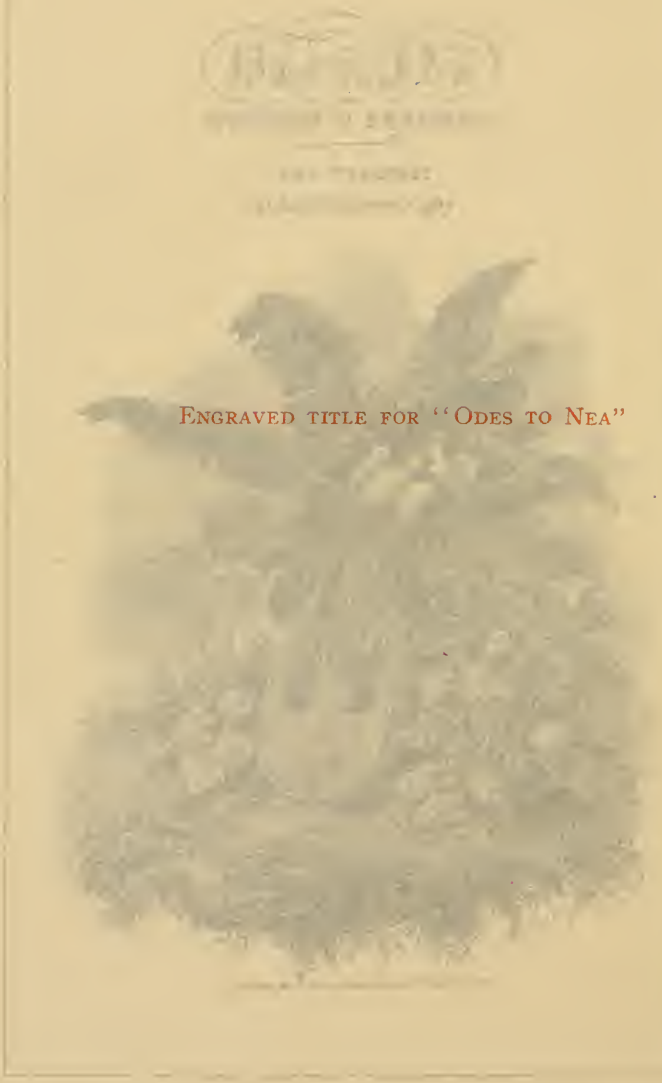
WRITTEN at BERMUDA

NEA TYPANNEI

EURIPIDES Medea, v. 967

Published Jan 15. 1808 by James Carpenter Old Bond Street





Engraved title for "Odes to Nea"

When, in 1806, in "Epistles, odes, and other poems,"[55] Moore published thirteen somewhat perfervid "Odes to Nea, written at Bermuda,"[56] Hester's husband seems to have felt that insult had been added to the former injury to his feelings, and to the end of his life he would never allow the works of the obnoxious bard in his house. Many still living remember Mr. Tucker as a man of imposing person and of fine character. Moore's traditional remark that when he gazed on "Nea" he thought of heaven, but when he looked at her husband he thought of the devil,[57] can be set down to mutual, and comprehensible, prejudice.

Tom Moore and Nea
From an engraving by Riches

[55]Jeffrey's denunciation of this volume as immoral, in the *Edinburgh review*, was the cause of Moore's bloodless duel with the great critic,—

"That ever glorious, almost fatal fray,
When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
And Bow-street Myrmidons stood laughing by."

[56]In Moore's collected "Works" two of the "Odes to Nea" are omitted, one is found in another part of the volume, and others are much altered, notably the pretty "Dream of antiquity." In the poem beginning "If I were yonder wave," for four stanzas of nonsense is substituted,

"Nor find I in creation aught
Of bright, or beautiful, or rare,

Hester Tucker died, still young, in 1817, having borne her husband a large family. The following somewhat formal obituary notice appeared in the *Bermuda gazette* for 6 December of that year:

"DIED

"In St. George's, after a short illness, on the morning of the 2d instant, (aged 31 years), Mrs. HESTHER LOUISA TUCKER, Wife of WILLIAM TUCKER, Esq., a Member of Assembly, and also a Magistrate for that Town and Parish.

"Possessing a most amiable and benevolent disposition, no one was more esteemed and beloved by her friends, when living, and no one has been more unfeignedly regretted and lamented by them after death, than Mrs. TUCKER.

"The unprecedented assemblage of persons of either sex, and of all ages and conditions, collected to pay the remains

Sweet to the sense, or pure to thought,
But thou art found reflected there",

which I think is charming. As an instance of changes made in the interests of propriety one may cite,

"Did not a frown from you reprove,
Myriads of eyes to me were none;
I should have — oh my only love!
My life! what should I *not* have done?"

the third and fourth lines of which appear in the "Works" thus:

"Enough for me to win your love,
And die upon the spot, when won"!

As an afterthought of the elderly poet this desperate avowal has unconscious humour.

[57] "The men of the island, I confess, are not very civilized; and the old philosopher, who imagined that, after this life, men would be changed into mules and women into turtle-doves, would find the metamorphosis in some degree anticipated at Bermuda." — "Epistles," p. 95, *note*.

the last sad tribute of respect, the tears which fell in sympathetic unison with those that graced the modest eulogy of the pulpit; and those unnumbered which bedewed her early grave, have sufficiently attested the merits of the deceased; and the Individuals who are more immediately affected by this dispensation of the Divine Providence, will, doubtless, find due consolation in the well-founded confidence, that as the Friend and Relative whose loss they deplore had lived here in the continued exercise of all the moral and social duties of the Woman and the Christian, so when her mortal frame was committed to its kindred dust, her Immortal Spirit,

'—— *pure, even as the best are pure,*'

had already 'winged its way' to those *Mansions in the Heavens not made with hands*, but prepared 'ere time was,' for the abode of the 'departed just made perfect,' there to reap the unfading, the never failing joys of an endless eternity."

In the churchyard of old St. Peter's, at St. George's, is a limestone tomb marked "Mr. William Tucker's family vault"; and this one may suppose to be Hester Tucker's last resting-place.

Mr. Tucker survived his "poor Hetty," as he was wont to allude to her, over fifty years, taking as a second wife a daughter of President Trott, of Walsingham. By one of time's little ironies two of his great-granddaughters bear the name of Nea, in memory of their ancestress's acquaintance with the man he detested.

VII

At the period of Moore's brief experience as a colonial official, Basil Hall, later celebrated as a writer of books of travel, was a "middy" on his Majesty's ship *Leander*, which customarily wintered at Bermuda. Years afterward Captain Hall wrote: "The most pleasing and most exact description which I know of Bermuda is to be found in Moore's 'Odes and Epistles' . . . The reason why his account exceeds in beauty as well as in precision that of other men probably is, that the scenes described lie so much beyond the scope of ordinary observation in colder climates, and the feelings which they excite in the beholder are so much higher than those produced by the scenery we have been accustomed to look at, that, unless the imagination be deeply drawn upon, and the diction sustained at a correspondent pitch, the words alone strike the ear, while the listener's fancy remains where it was. In Moore's account there is not only no exaggeration, but, on the contrary, a wonderful degree of temperance in the midst of a feast which, to his rich fancy, must have been peculiarly tempting"[58] — a dictum with which one must, I think, agree,

[58] "Fragments of voyages and travels" [first series]. 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1831. Vol. ii., chap. vi. "These poems," says Hall, "happen also to have been written at the very time (1804) when I was myself on the spot, and when, with what little store of imagination any mid may be supposed to possess, I was feeling exactly as the poet did."

whether he care for Moore's style of poetry or not. In later times among the thousands who seek refuge at Bermuda from the rigours of the northern winter have been eminent writers — Mrs. Dorr, the gentle Warner, Mr. Scollard, Mr. Howells, Mr. Kipling; these, and others, have described its charms, in prose or in verse. But it is, after all, from passages in "Odes to Nea" and the "Epistles" to Lady Donegall and Moore's friends Morgan and Atkinson that one best realises the unique loveliness of Bermuda. Moore caught preëminently the right note.

Except for this the "Odes to Nea" possess no very striking merit. They show the most marked characteristics of Moore's earlier poetry — the oriental voluptuousness of his fancy, his fondness for classical allusion, the triviality of his thought. He is still the "young Catullus of his day":[59] his lay is "sweet" and occasionally "immoral." An early American critic — Joseph Dennie — praised the following lines for "an almost Arabian boldness of expression":[60]

"Behold the leafy mangrove, bending
O'er the waters blue and bright,

[59]Moore himself, when setting out on his travels, compares himself with

"Verona's child of song,
When flying from the Phrygian shore."

"Childe Paddie" calls him "the modern Catullus," and another ferocious satirist — "F. J. Esq.," who put forth a small volume in 1806 — the "loose Catullus." Few writers have had more soubriquets than Moore.

[60]"Epistles, odes and other poems." By Thomas Moore, Esq. Second [American] edition. To which is prefixed, by the American editor, a notice, critical and biographical of the author. Philadelphia: published by John Watts. 1806. P. xxxii.

Like Nea's silky lashes, lending
Shadow to her eyes of light!"[61]

One of the best of the "Odes" is "The Snow-Spirit":

"No, ne'er did the wave in its element steep
An island of lovelier charms;
It blooms in the giant embrace of the deep,
Like Hebe in Hercules' arms!
The tint of your bowers is balm to the eye,
Their melody balm to the ear;
But the fiery planet of day is too nigh,
And the Snow-Spirit never comes here!

"The down from his wing is as white as the pearl
Thy lips for their cabinet stole,
And it falls on the green earth as melting, my girl,
As a murmur of thine on the soul![62]
Oh! fly to the clime, where he pillows the death,
As he cradles the birth of the year;
Bright are your bowers and balmy their breath,
But the Snow-Spirit cannot come here!

"How sweet to behold him, when borne on the gale,
And brightening the bosom of morn,
He flings, like the priest of Diana, a veil
O'er the brow of each virginal thorn!
Yet think not, the veil he so chillingly casts,
Is the veil of a vestal severe;
No, no, thou wilt see, what a moment it lasts,
Should the Snow-Spirit ever come here!

[61] "Epistles," p. 98.

[62] The "Works" have:

"The down from his wing is as white as the pearl
That shines through thy lips when they part,
And it falls on the green earth as melting, my girl,
As a murmur of thine on the heart."

Buildings Bay, Bermuda

"But fly to his region — lay open thy zone,
And he'll weep all his brilliancy dim,
To think that a bosom, as white as his own,
Should not melt in the day-beam like him!
Oh! lovely the print of those delicate feet
O'er his luminous path will appear —
Fly! my beloved! this island is sweet,
But the Snow-Spirit cannot come here!"[63]

Another commemorates a stroll with "Nea" beside

"That little Bay, where winding in
From ocean's rude and angry din,
(As lovers steal to bliss),
The billows kiss the shore, and then
Flow calmly to the deep again,
As though they did not kiss!"[64] —

identified with Buildings Bay, at the eastern end of St. George's island, where, three hundred years ago, the ship-wrecked Somers built his cedar pinnace. The figure is pretty enough to make up for a later stanza of this rather osculatory poem:

"I stoop'd to cull, with faltering hand,
A shell that, on the golden sand,
Before us faintly gleam'd;
I rais'd it to your lips of dew,
You kist the shell, I kist it too —
Good heaven! how sweet it seem'd!"[65]

"Good heaven indeed!" one exclaims, "could callow senti-

[63] "Epistles," pp. 102-3.

[64] "Epistles," p. 84.

[65] A performance which the sedate Moore of the "Works" scarcely approved, for we find the lines there amended —

"I trembling rais'd it, and when you
Had kist the shell, I kist it too —
How sweet, *how wrong* it seem'd!"

mentality go further?" No minor poet of to-day could perpetrate stuff like this; but it should not be forgotten that the modern lyric was then still in the experimental stage. English romanticism was but finding its legs after its long sleep in the dark womb of eighteenth century formality. It is noteworthy that, in a letter written to Moore in 1838, Mary Shelley, referring to her husband's admiration for many of his songs and shorter poems, instanced "your unspeakably beautiful poems to Nea."[66] One must, however, agree with Amédée Pichot when he says: "Nea . . . ressemblait beaucoup aux Julia, aux Clara, aux Fanny et aux beautés anonymes chantées naguère par Th. Little."[67]

"Nea" then takes her place with the Julias, the Claras, and the Fannies: the young Tennyson, it may be remarked, left to posterity a similar, if less extensive, gallery. Moore wan-

[66] "Memoirs," vol. vii., p. 251.

[67] That rather scurrilous divine, Henry Boyd — vicar of Rathfriland and translator of Dante — who seems to have hated Moore, wrote, less politely, in 1809, —

> "'Tis but a losing traffic
> To buy a place in such opprobrious niches
> With Delia, Celia, Chloe, and such b——s. . . .
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> 'Lord! how we apples swim,' he seems to say,
> As with the noble subjects of his lay
> The little grocer swims along
> The muddy stream of Sapphic song,
> With peeresses and peers
> Shaking his spaniel ears.
> Soon may Bermuda's strand admit the bevy!
> Qui Bavium non odet, amet tua carmina, Mævi."

dered far and wide "in the flowery fields of amatory nonsense."[68] Young men are, indeed, much alike — one dear charmer succeeds another; but a writing young man of exceptional gifts records his infidelities unforgetably.

[68]The borrowed phrase probably belongs to the great Virginia editor, Thomas Ritchie: — "Let Mr. Moore wander, as long as he has wings to bear him, in the flowery fields of amatory nonsense. Busy little spirit! Let it rove from Nea to Susan, or from Fanny to Chloriss, from 'the bosom of a rose' to the bosom of his mistress" . . . (Richmond *Enquirer*, 30 September, 1806)—very much the picture in Crofton Croker's caricature of Moore.

VIII

Two rather dull anecdotes of Moore's life in Bermuda have come down to us — each with its pendant poem.

He was very inquisitive — and he was morbidly afraid of mice. A young Bermudian lady, Miss Hinson, whom he often visited, learned his antipathy — which she evidently did not share! — and decided to use it to punish him for prying. Expecting a call from Mr. Moore, she heroically secured a live mouse and locked it up in her work-box. Nor did her plot miscarry. Her guest was hardly seated when he began trying the lock of the box, and, on his raising the lid, out jumped the mouse into his lap. This episode is asserted to have ended the friendship, and that to Miss Hinson the lines were addressed:

"When I lov'd you, I can't but allow
I had many an exquisite minute;
But the scorn that I feel for you now
Hath even more luxury in it!

"Thus, whether we're on or we're off,
Some witchery seems to await you;
To love you is pleasant enough,
And, oh! 'tis delicious to hate you!"[69]

After all this seems to express rather a playful resentment. Like the fair Hester, Miss Hinson became a Mrs. Tucker. She is still remembered in old age as one of the last Bermudian ladies who travelled about in a sedan-chair.

[69] "Epistles, p. 75.

Joseph Dennie's Philadelphia *Port folio*, a periodical which made the most of the vicinity of a famous British poet, contains in the issue for 14 July, 1804 — the number which announced the tragic death of Alexander Hamilton — this editorial comment:

"This brilliant specimen of the poetical powers of one, not more admired by his friends for the elegance of his literature, than for the goodness and glow of his heart, was written while the author was at Bermuda, that *Summer* island which his favourite Waller has made to '*live* in description, and *look green in song*.' Mr. Moore being in company with a lady of the place, she playfully proffered him a *ring*. He gallantly replied in the following gallant verses. . . .

"No — Lady! — Lady! — keep the ring,
Oh! think how many a future year
Of placid smile and downy wing
May sleep within its holy sphere.

"Do not disturb their tranquil dream,
Tho' love hath ne'er the mystery warm'd,
Yet Heaven still sheds some soothing beam,
To bless the bond itself hath form'd.

"But then that eye! . . . that burning eye!
O! it doth ask, with magic power,
If Heav'n can ever bless the tie,
Where love enwreaths no genial flower."

And so forth, and so forth: "misunderstood" wives have long been favourite game for the sympathetic poet. By some stretch of the imagination one might connect this scarcely austere

poem — "The wedding ring" — with Hester Tucker, but for the fact that it appears in the "Epistles"[70] with the date 1801, three years before Moore visited Bermuda! It will be recalled how Mr. Arthur Pendennis "altered and adapted former poems in his possession, and which had been composed for a certain Miss Emily Fotheringay, for the use and to the Christian name of Miss Blanche Amory."

[70]Pp. 66-69.

IX

But even love-making and ode-making, and the "innumerable" dances of which he wrote home, with gay conceit, "They threaten me here with impeachment, as being in a fair way to make bankrupts of the whole island. There has been nothing but gaiety since I came, and there never was such a *furor* for dissipation known in the town of St. George's before";[71] even the grand turtle feasts of calipash and Madeira, could not long stay the mercurial poet. As his reason for quitting the unremunerative post, which was to be administered by a deputy, he is said to have assigned "a disorder in the chest"!

Toward the end of April he sailed away on the *Boston* frigate, with the commander of which, John Erskine Douglas, he formed a life-long friendship. 7 May found him in New York, writing to his mother in the common tone of British tourists in America at that period: "Such a place! such people! barren and secluded as poor Bermuda is, I think it a paradise to any spot in America that I have seen."[72] What interested him most was a glimpse of Jerome Bonaparte and his American bride.[73]

[71] "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 155.

[72] "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 159.

[73] Almost twenty years later, during Moore's enforced absence from England, he made the acquaintance of Madame Bonaparte — a rejected wife, but an admired figure in European society. According to her biographer, Mr. E. L. Didier, "the sentimental poet failed to attract her — a beautiful woman destitute of all sentiment."

Embarking once more upon the *Boston*, he revisited Norfolk, and bade good-bye to his friends there. Mrs. Hamilton, he says, "caught the way to my heart by calling herself my

New York in 1805

mother." Thence he took the mail-coach for a journey northward. At Washington he helped the Merrys quarrel with President Jefferson. Mr. Dennie, the Hopkinsons, and their Federalist friends at Philadelphia lionised him to his heart's content. He was "all rapture and amazement" at the Falls of Niagara. A *chanson* which he heard the rowers sing on his voyage down the St. Lawrence suggested the beautiful "Canadian boat-song." At Halifax he rejoined the *Boston* and, in October, sailed for England.

NOTE. In an elaborate obituary of Moore, by Amédée Pichot, in the *Révue britannique* for March and April, 1852, occurs a sentence which I here translate: "From Halifax the registrar went to spend a few more days at his post, and install a deputy in his place, reëmbarked for England, and

thanked his patrons there, believing that he owed to them the leisure of a sinecure." This assertion is repeated verbatim in the article on Moore in "Biographie universelle" (Michaud), vol. xxix., abridged by Pichot from his paper in the *Révue*.

Pichot was a high authority on contemporary English writers. Besides the *Révue* article, he published a critique of Moore's works in his "Voyage historique et littéraire en Angleterre et en Ecosse" (Paris, 1825), and translated "Lalla Rookh" into French. He congratulated himself in the *Révue*, alluding to the meagreness of the articles, called forth by Moore's death, in the British magazines, on having original material to draw upon. But in the impression that Moore twice visited Bermuda he was certainly mistaken; and as the statement is rather curiously reënforced by Bermudian tradition — like most tradition quite unhampered by dates — it seems worth disproving.

Twenty-one letters by Moore, covering his visit to America and the return voyage, have been printed. These form a rough itinerary of his journeyings. The following are to be found in the "Memoirs," vol. i., pp. 137-177: To his mother, from Norfolk, 7 November, 1803; 28 November; 2 December; 10 December; from Bermuda, 19 January, 1804; 24 January; 17 February; 19 March; from New York, 7 May; "Aboard the *Boston*, Sandy Hook, thirty miles from New York," 11 May; from Baltimore, 11 June, finished at Philadelphia, 16 June; from Passaick Falls, N. J., 26 June; from Saratoga, 10 July; from "Geneva, Genessee Country," N. Y., 17 July; from "Chippewa, Upper Canada," 22 July; from Niagara, 24 July, finished at Chippewa, 25 July; from Quebec, 20 August; from Windsor, Nova Scotia, 16 September; from "Plymouth, Old England once more," 12 November. Two more appeared in the *Critic* (New York) for 2 June, 1888: To Joseph Dennie, from New York, 2 July, 1804; from Halifax, 29 September.

The date of the second letter to Mr. Dennie shows the impossibility of Pichot's statement. Moore reached Plymouth 12 November, 1804, never again to cross the Atlantic. The voyage occupied, he says, twenty-eight days, which makes the day of sailing 15 October — it was, to be exact, the 14th. This leaves a fortnight for him to voyage from Halifax to Bermuda, spend some days there ("*aller passer encore quelques jours à son poste*"), return to Halifax, and embark for home! Still — to exhaust the possibilities — the *Boston might* have called at Bermuda on her way to England; but we know she did nothing of the kind. Her log, preserved at the Public Record Office, shows that she took a northerly course: she was farthest south the second day out, in latitude 43° 26′ N.

X

Moore's experience in sinecure holding was dearly bought. His office was never in itself very profitable, nor was it, as he had once hoped it might be, a stepping-stone to higher political preferment. As, moreover, it was the direct cause to him of insolvency and exile, its disadvantages were not merely negative. In 1818 came the shocking intelligence that his agent at Bermuda had embezzled the proceeds of a ship and cargo. Later informations only made the matter worse. In July, 1819, he recorded in his journal that the claims upon him appeared to be near six thousand pounds;[74] and in September he was obliged to leave England to avoid imprisonment for debt. After some travel with Lord John Russell in Switzerland and Italy, where he visited Byron, he was rejoined by wife and children, and settled down near Paris to his usual life of work and social diversion. In the autumn of 1821 he arrived in England incognito, spent a week with his father and mother in Dublin, and returning to London found that friends had finally compromised the claims against him for a thousand pounds—of which an uncle of the defaulter, a rich London merchant, who had recommended "this precious deputy" to Moore, contributed three hundred. Moore had steadily declined offers of assistance in his trouble, at last accepting

[74] "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 339.

a loan from Lord Lansdowne ("that his generous impulse should not be wholly frustrated") only when able at once to repay it.[75] The whole episode testifies to his independence and worth.

PENCIL-SKETCH OF MOORE
Attributed to Gilbert Stuart Newton

While living in France he became acquainted with Washington Irving and his friend Stuart Newton, the painter, to whom during the visit to London in 1821 Moore sat.[76] Irving

[75] "Memoirs," vol. iii., pp. 291-2.

[76] An engraving by W. H. Watt, of Newton's rather stiff portrait was published in 1828. The sketch here given from the original in my possession we may also reasonably date about 1821.

in his diary, 16 May, 1821, notes a conversation with Moore, in which he "told me that he was once giving Kenney[77] an account of his misfortunes; the heavy blow he sustained in consequence of the default of his agent in Bermuda. Kenney expressed the strongest sympathy. 'Gad, Sir, it's well you were a Poet; a Philosopher never would have borne it.' "[78]

One evening in 1822, before Moore's final return to England, he received a call from a naval gentleman, who "said with what delight he and his brother officers had read my Bermuda poems on the spot; how they had looked for the little bay, &c. Told me that my pretty little friend Mrs. W. Tucker, was dead, and that they showed her grave at St. George's as being that of 'Nea.' "[79] Nearly twenty years later he received from his friend Moran an extract from Miss Lloyd's "Sketches" concerning her introduction to "the family of Nea." Moore—not having the context—wonders "whether they have hit upon the *right* Nea; though," he adds, "it would be rather hard for them to do so, as the *ideal* Nea of my 'Odes' was made out

[77] James Kenney (1780 — 1849) was the author of "Raising the wind," "Sweethearts and wives," "The world" — of which Byron wrote:

"Kenney's 'World' — ah! where is Kenney's wit?
Tires the sad gallery, lulls the listless pit" —

and other plays.

[78] "The life and letters of Washington Irving." By Pierre M. Irving, 4 vols. New York, 1862-'64. Vol. ii., p. 47. The same anecdote is told in Moore's "Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 169.

[79] "Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 359.

of *two real* ones."[80] No clue to the identity of Nea No. 2 has come to my knowledge—unless she were Miss Hinson of the mouse story.

His post at Bermuda Moore retained in name till 1841, eleven years before his death, when, at the suggestion of the energetic Governor Reid,[81] he was superseded on the ground of continued non-residence.[82] During the thirty-eight years he held the office he had been in the active discharge of its duties less than four months. Those were the Tite Barnacle days of the civil service.

[80] "Memoirs," vol. vii., p. 288.

[81] Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General Sir) William Reid, the great meteorologist, governor of Bermuda 1839-1846.

[82] As no renewal of the appointment, which Moore had probably ceased to regard as of any importance, was obtained on the accession of Queen Victoria, it actually lapsed six months after the date of William IV.'s death, 20 June, 1837. 7 September, 1841, the governor commissioned as Moore's successor S. G. Spencer, who had acted as deputy since 1819.

For this information I am indebted to the courtesy of the Colonial Office.

XI

HERE and there in the "Irish melodies" are lines like these, in which it is not difficult to trace a reminiscence of Bermuda:

"Never did Ariel's plume,
At golden sunset, hover
O'er such scenes of bloom" . . .

"And when, in other climes, we meet
Some isle or vale enchanting,
Where all looks flow'ry, wild and sweet,
And nought but love is wanting;
We think how great had been our bliss,
If Heav'n had but assign'd us
To live and die in scenes like this,
With some we've left behind us!"

When, in the drawing-rooms of the great, Moore sang,—

"Oh! had we some bright[83] little Isle of our own,
In a blue summer ocean, far off and alone,
Where a leaf never dies in the still-blooming bowers,
And the bee banquets on through a whole year of flowers;
Where the sun loves to pause
With so fond a delay,
That the night only draws
A thin veil o'er the day;
Where simply to feel that we breathe, that we live,
Is worth the best joy that life elsewhere can give!"

he may well have recalled Bermuda—that lonely, ever-verdant isle, with its quick-changing skies, and rose-tinted sands washed by delicate blue waters.

[83]In Moore's manuscript, kindly lent me by Mr. T. F. Dillon Croker, "blest."

In a letter to his mother, written in 1804, soon after his arrival at New York, he expressed the same thoughts, long afterward embodied in musical verse. "When I left Bermuda," he says, "I could not help regretting that the hopes which took me thither could not be even half realised, for I should love to live there, and you would like it too, dear mother; and I think, if the situation would give me but a fourth of what I was so deludingly taught to expect, you should all have come to me; and *though set apart from the rest of the world, we should have found in that quiet spot, and under that sweet sky, quite enough to counterbalance what the rest of the world could give us.*"[84] Such dreams come at times to most men; but to Moore, born man of society, one cannot doubt that life on a remote semi-tropical island, however idyllic, would in the end have become a tedious exile.

[84] "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 160. The italics are mine.

XII

Moore's prestige as a poet has passed, though not so completely as age-end critics of the last century imagined. Taste has, none the less, changed since the youth of the old lady in Wilkie Collins's novel who "knew Tom Moore by heart," and thought that for the moon to hide her light

> "When to Eveleen's bower
> The Lord of the Valley with false vows came"

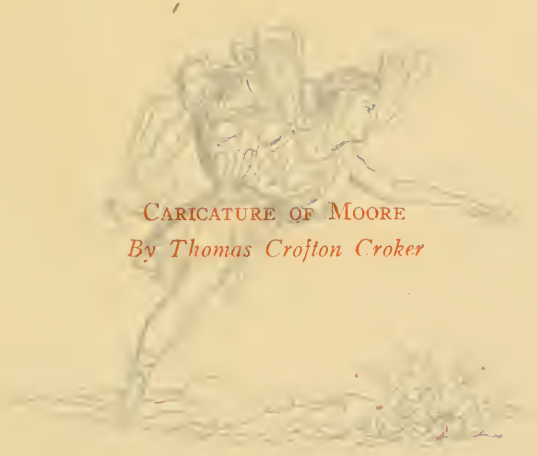
was the only proper thing for the moon to do, because Tom Moore wrote it that way. But for one not wholly possessed by the Zeitgeist which regards not the bard of Erin, memories of the light-hearted minstrel yet linger about the island whose unchanging beauties he celebrated more than a century ago. As one strolls along a cedar-shaded road it seems not too impossible to meet Mr. Moore, the new registrar of the admiralty court, riding out into "the country parts of the island . . . to swear a man to the truth of a Dutch invoice he had translated." At old St. George's town, in his day the centre of the life of the colony, it is easy enough to picture him, attending through the narrow streets some Bermudian girl, who listens, shy but amused, to the little Irishman's sallies. We may not detain them. Everlastingly man and maid, youth and beauty, pass around the corner and out of sight: so have passed Tom Moore and "Nea," and sweet Bessy

W 56

St. George's in 1816
From a print by Stadt

Dyke, who before many years was to receive his life-long devotion.

"The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom."



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